

Partners

They hurried to the “resigning Prime Minister” the moment he summoned them. They did not hesitate, nor did the thought of hesitation ever cross their minds. Then they leapt with him into power and settled beside him in office. They advanced whenever he advanced and withdrew whenever he withdrew. They loved all that he loved and hated all that he hated.

They marched beside him with determination and resolve, never lagging behind him by so much as a finger’s breadth. Indeed, some among them may at times have gone even further than he did. Perhaps it was he himself who restrained them, calming them and teaching them that patience could prove more useful than haste.

When he resolved to change the constitutional order, they rushed to change it. When he proposed crushing the people, they did not hesitate to crush the people. When he preferred violence, they did not fear to prefer violence as well.

They moved forward with grim firmness, without looking behind them or too far ahead. Their eyes remained fixed only upon this man who stood among them working, summoning them to action, filling them with hope and ambition.

Some among them occasionally weakened before these immense events and terrible deeds toward which the resigning Prime Minister drove them. Yet a glance from him or a smile was enough to remove their weakness and replace it with renewed strength and eagerness.

Soldiers and police clashed with the people. Men were killed, others wounded, the earth stained with blood, and cries of suffering rose toward heaven. Yet none of this bloodshed frightened them, nor did those cries awaken pity within them.

Their state was one of dark and terrible firmness—hard, merciless, and violent. They neither remembered yesterday nor thought of tomorrow. They did not hear the weeping of mourners or the cries of the afflicted. They showed no compassion toward mothers grieving for their sons, nor toward children grieving for fathers, nor toward wives condemned to widowhood.

Thus months passed after months, and years after years. Egypt was forced into paths it had never desired, and Egyptians were wounded in what they held most sacred.

Then time did its work. Bonds of affection between the resigning Prime Minister and his colleagues weakened. Some began to denounce others, some plotted against others, and some placed obstacles before their former allies until all harmony collapsed among these supposed friends—or rather among these quarreling partners.

The Prime Minister was eventually compelled to resign so that he might rid himself of certain burdens and certain colleagues, only to form another Ministry in which he would replace some men with others thought more capable of continuing along the same path first laid down.

And those new men, if invited into office, would behave exactly as the old ones had behaved. They would share responsibility for everything, support one another in everything, and eventually depart tomorrow just as their predecessors depart today—free from blame and already preparing themselves to leap once more into power beside yet another leader whenever summoned.

If such things had happened anywhere outside Egypt, people would have reacted with outrage. Yet in Egypt these events provoke neither astonishment nor even visible anger, because Egyptians have long known that among them exists a generation of professional office-seekers whose habit is to wait for power when excluded from it and to accept it immediately whenever called.

This generation has existed in Egypt for a long time. Egyptians know it well and reject it deeply. Yet what can Egyptians do about it? Had Egypt truly controlled its own affairs, it would have removed this class far from politics and public life altogether.

For these men do not love government for the sake of the nation. They love government for its own sake. Their existence convinces foreigners that Egypt is easy to govern so long as there remain Egyptians willing to carry the burdens of politics without conditions or principles.

Egyptians must remember all this and never forget it. They must open their eyes and look beyond these thin clouds to see the shameful maneuvers performed by this generation of office-seekers.

They need only listen to the names now appearing daily in newspapers as possible candidates for the coming Ministry. They will discover that most of them are the same friends and allies of the resigning Prime Minister who helped him establish the new order, restrict liberties, and carry out the disastrous

policy that has brought Egypt to its present condition.

Yet these same men now present themselves as pure and virtuous statesmen, entirely worthy—both in their own eyes and in the eyes of their supporters—of governing Egypt once again.

Yes, Egyptians should listen carefully to these names and reflect deeply upon the irony of events. What greater mockery of the people could there be than for those who shared Sidqi Pasha in everything now to prepare themselves to inherit his power as though they had never supported him at all?

What greater insult could there be than for those who helped create this heavy inheritance now to complain of its weight while preparing to seize it for themselves and make it even heavier still?

Egyptians must think deeply and remember that the burdens Sidqi Pasha bears before his nation, his country, and his God are indeed grave—but he does not bear them alone.

Those burdens are shared by all those who supported and defended him yesterday and who now turn their backs upon him while preparing to inherit his rule.

The failure that struck Sidqi Pasha is not his alone. It is a common failure shared between him, his ministers, and their political allies among those parties that until recently proudly called themselves the “brother parties.”

How bitter is the irony that presents Sidqi Pasha as though he alone were guilty while portraying his former partners as though they alone possessed the power to repair the damage he caused.

Egyptians must think upon all this carefully. They must record it and remember it. They must prove that this political farce performed behind a curtain deceives no one except the actors themselves.

It is nothing more than a farce, and its fate will be no better than the fate of the policy imposed by the resigning Prime Minister upon Egypt for more than three years.

And Egyptians must never despair. Their affairs will undoubtedly return to their own hands, and they will prevent their opponents from continuing this dangerous game that threatens dignity, interests, and morals alike.